

MEMORANDUM FOR: D/DCI/NI
FROM : NIO/E
SUBJECT : Eliciting Presidential Priorities

1. Research in Process and in Prospect:

In the sphere of economic intelligence, attached are two lists which hint at the kinds of analytic problems on which we have some capabilities and work in process. The first list arranges the work generally under broad headings of the sort that might fit into a new structuring of priorities to be shown to the President. The second arranges the work into the categories of the present priority list. There are obviously many ways in which these listings could be improved upon.

2. Eliciting a Presidential Response:

I do not wish to sound negative on the idea of seeking specific Presidential requests for independent intelligence contributions, but I do feel that a note of caution is in order, lest we raise unrealistic expectations.

As you know only too well, the President is inundated with far more information and advice than he can possibly absorb or utilize, and the competition for his ear is fierce. Obviously, the intelligence community is only one of a large number of information producers in and out of government, and in most areas it does not have unique competences or capabilities. By far the majority of our output is in the nature of an "intermediate product," in the sense of being an input into the decision process. Certainly as far as economics is concerned, we make our greatest contribution by participating in the government-wide effort to staff that process, i.e., by contributing policy-relevant analysis to it.

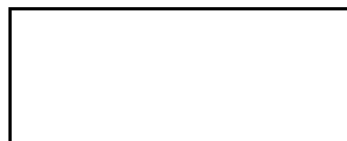
There are areas in which we have unique capabilities---obviously in the strategic area, (there is only one set or reconnaissance satellites, and they are ours!); in a number of areas of sensitive scientific and political analysis, and even sometimes in economics, e.g., our work on the

But my point is that the areas of uniqueness and the islands of excellence are few, and even these are not always closely related to Presidential interests.

Thus I would simply argue that any initiative we might make to elicit Presidential requests for intelligence inputs directly to him be preceded by a searching look at our analytic capabilities to identify those

few areas of special competence in which we really feel we have something unique to contribute to him. My guess, based largely on what I know of the economics work, is that we will find that our most significant contributions are already being very well and quickly communicated to the President, to the extent that they matter to him. Indeed, I am impressed with how well the communications system seems to be working in this new administration, even at such an early stage.

For my part, naturally, I will be very happy to make an effort to identify the kinds of issues in economics on which we might make a special contribution, but they will almost certainly be issues of a longer-term, developmental nature.



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Attachments

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